

FAIRBANKS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

City of Fairbanks, City Hall, Engineer's Conference Room
800 Cushman Street
Fairbanks, Alaska

Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2008

1. Call to Order

Todd Boyce called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

- * FMATS Policy Committee members
- ** FMATS Staff members
- *** FMATS Technical Committee members

NAME	REPRESENTING
*** Donna Gardino	(absent) FMATS Coordinator
*** Bernardo Hernandez	(absent) FNSB Director Community Planning
*** Bill Butler	(12:25) City of North Pole
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Bruce Carr	(absent) ARRC
*** Emily Bratcher	FNSB Planning Commission
*** Glenn Miller	(absent) FNSB
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC
*** Mike Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks
*** Marc Wohlford	(absent) UAF Facilities Services
*** Michael Meeks	(absent) Ft. Wainwright
*** Eric Fitzgerald	(absent) Tanana Chiefs Conference
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF
** Todd Boyce	FNSB – acting for Donna Gardino
David Leone	FNSB Transit - acting for Glenn Miller
Doug Braddock	FNSB CP - acting for Bernardo Hernandez
Thomas Hancock	FNSB Parks & Recreation
Jerry Colp	City of Fairbanks
Jo Schlotfeldt	DOT&PF
Buzz Otis	City of North Pole Econ. Development
Matt Stowe	PDC, Inc.
JC Phillips	
Randy Zarnke	

3. Public Comment Period

Randy Zarnke, Island Homes, often uses the Steese Bridge while biking, walking and rollerblading. "Something that has gone unnoticed is that with the gravel spread on the Steese, a lot of that kicks over the separating barrier between the road and the walkway/bike path. If it would be possible, my idea would be to send a water truck through there, first thing in the spring, to blow that gravel off into the river. Part of the reason it stays there is that a fence goes right down the barrier, so it is not easy to sweep one side or the other. I have mentioned it to a

couple other people that work there. They said they would check into it, but nothing has ever happened.” He also requested a brief update on the Third Street Upgrade and wanted to know if a new environmental study is needed.

Ethan Birkholz responded it is in Right of Way phase right now. For timing, if it doesn't have to go to condemnation, it can take a year or two. If it has to go to condemnation, it could take an extra year. Typically, if a job like that takes more than three years, the environmental document has to be re-evaluated.

4. Approval of the August 13, 2008 Agenda. Add FMATS letter of support for application to Community Transportation Association of America to Other Issues per David Leone.

- **MOTION:** To approve the August 13, 2008 agenda as amended. (Birkholz/Schmetzer). None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the July 2, 2008 Minutes

- **MOTION:** To approve the July 2, 2008 minutes as presented. (Schmetzer/Pristash). None opposed. Approved.

6. Old Business

a. Skarland Trail / Birch Hill Connector Scoring. Scoring was postponed from last meeting. Ethan Birkholz asked Tom Hancock from Borough Parks and Recreation about the crossings on Farmers Loop and the Steese Expressway.

Tom Hancock – Primarily the application deals with one crossing on Farmers Loop near UAF that would eventually act as part of a connector system we are working on with DOT, with user groups to connect in to the Chena Hot Springs Road area and the Birch Hill area across the Steese Highway. The idea would be with a safe crossing at Farmers Loop, to eventually connect in with trail systems and recreation areas beyond the University out towards the Parks Highway area, north of the Goldstream Road. More importantly, it would connect in with trail systems that are associated with the Jeff Studdert Alaska Dog Musher's Association (ADMA) trails, through Creamer's Field area and eventually across the Steese Highway towards Birch Hill/Chena Hot Springs Road trails. They are working to find a corridor that would connect those different regions. This application primarily deals with the crossing of Farmers Loop in conjunction with other projects with the Steese Highway. Some preliminary research has been done, depending on where a potential crossing could be on Farmers Loop, as to whose property would be affected. Property for a connector trail reconnaissance has not been pursued. The University Land Office would be worked with for University trail corridor property, or with private property owners such as Fairbanks Golf and Country Club. If the University North Campus sub-committee supported the idea, possibly working with the University on a potential limited connection into the University Skarland Ski Trail System. The idea has been proposed to that group and the reception was warm, not necessarily connecting a trail into the system, but to the idea of a crossing at Farmers Loop so that students and visitors to the Northern Campus could exit out of the University property across Farmers Loop into the Jeff Studdert trails. ADMA is aware of it but it has not been proposed at a board meeting. The Jeff Studdert trail system is for non-motorized use. One of the things they want to work on with ADMA is separating out a corridor from the University campus area to the Steese Highway, either parallel or another corridor, which would provide for motorized use, as well as keep a majority of the trails non-motorized.

Discussion: There are continual conflicts with motorized/non-motorized on any trail system. The Studdert trails are used by mushers as a one-way trail. It is a race trail, not just for the dog mushers, but it is groomed and used as a sprint trail for a 20mph dog trail.

A safe crossing would provide a funnel point for both motorized and multi-use non-motorized users and at that location, it could be segregated out, possibly along a public right of way.

Ethan Birkholz - There are a lot of issues to be decided up front before the design process could start. This is similar to the earmark for a connector from Farmers Loop to Chena Hot Springs and would tie into this whole concept. Several details need to be worked out first through a recon study, get the ADMA and University on board, location of the crossing, right of way issues, etc. He would like to see a project package on a recon level.

Emily Bratcher asked regarding the crossing already at Farmers Loop and Ballaine and other past safety issues.

The problem with the existing sidewalk crossing there is gravel on the roadway which is a problem for skiers and other non-motorized users. There are not many reported accidents at that location.

- **MOTION:** To email scores for this project to Margaret Carpenter by 8/15/08. (Schmetzer/Pristash) None opposed. Approved.

b. Peridot Street. This project was commented on at the Policy Committee last month. The Policy Committee asked the Technical Committee to score it this month. Todd Boyce reported a minimum of 66' right of way section line easement the entire length of Peridot between Badger Road and the New Richardson Hwy.

Emily Bratcher asked about pedestrian facilities and street lights within the right of way. Ethan Birkholz said it could possibly make a widened shoulder, but is probably going to be out of the right of way in some areas, it depends on how much fill has to go out there. The estimates are most likely just for the construction, not the street lights, because the sub-grade has issues there.

Project scoring 40.3.

c. 2009-2012 TIP Project Scoring Summary. A table of the committee project scores from the last meeting was given to members.

d. 2009-20012 TIP Development Update. Headquarters indicated the additional review period was not necessary, therefore 30 more days were allowed and the timeline revised.

- **MOTION:** To recommend approval of the revised timeline to the Policy Committee. (Schmetzer/Birkholz) None opposed. Approved.

e. Obligation Status Report. Ethan Birkholz outlined the obligation plan which was included in the meeting packet.

7. New Business

a. Letter: Land Use Decisions and Transportation Impacts. Todd Boyce presented a letter Donna Gardino offered to write at the last Technical Committee meeting. Discussion: This is not in the purview of the Technical Committee to send a letter of this nature to the Policy Committee. The letter is not clear and should be revised. One of the examples is lack of pedestrian facilities in the Bentley Trust area. In order for the Borough to require this would take major changes to existing zoning and subdivision ordinances. Bentley is zoned general use, without pedestrian facilities or parking required. There is an ordinance for the city

engineer to provide for access to right of way in a safe manner, but does not say who pays for the safety upgrades. DOT operates under Alaskan statute where a safety chief will say DOT has the authority to require developers to do a TIA and share mitigation costs but the statute actually says DOT will work together with the local municipalities to ensure safe access. Donna Gardino offered to write the letter to send to the Policy Committee because of the discussion at the last Technical Committee meeting where members were in general agreement that limited public dollars are used to subsidize the developers.

Mike Schmetzer said the City Chief of Staff, an attorney, was concerned about the content of the letter. He suggested each member take this back to his/her director, mayor, or elected official to discuss.

- **MOTION:** To table action on the letter to the Policy Committee regarding Development Impacts on Transportation Infrastructure until the next meeting. (Pristash/Schmetzer) None opposed. Approved.

b. Draft 2009-2012 UPWP. It was submitted to Headquarters and was returned with several technical corrections. The main correction they wanted to change was in the coordinator's office, which was listed under Task 300. HQ wanted that included in the planning process Task 100. There is also a funding change where the coordinator's budget should be included in the UPWP.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve the 2009-2012 UPWP as presented. (Bratcher/Birkholz) None opposed. Approved.

c. Wendell Street ADA Phase II New Estimate. The City restructured what they were going to do on the first stage of construction. They need \$80,000 of Phase II in 2008, rather than the initial \$40,000 which was discussed at the last Policy Committee meeting. Construction for the first stage decreased by \$264,000. \$286,000 is the current construction estimate for Stage I. Stage II estimate is now \$800,000 which is shown in 2009. The \$70,000 in 381 funds had been shown in 2007, but was never programmed, it is now in 2008. For 2nd & Wilbur, the Phase 4 increase is from \$315,000 to \$458,000. Wendell Street ADA is restructured and will increase Phase 2 from \$40,000 to \$120,400 while Phase 4 in 2008 decreased from \$550,000 to \$280,500 and Phase 5 in 2009 for Stage 2 increased to \$800,000. For Homestead/NPHS Blvd, we needed to add \$27,200 in Phase 2 in 2008, add \$60,700 to Phase 7 to account for some utility relocations and increase Phase 4 from \$1,207,000 to \$1,377,000. The committee combined action on the following increases in the TIP Mod #8 into a motion.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve the cost increases for 2nd & Wilbur, Wendell Street ADA, Homestead Road. (Birkholz/Schmetzer) None opposed. Approved

d. Trainor Gate and Farewell Area Improvements Scope Clarification. Mike Schmetzer reported that in October of 2007, Mayor Thompson brought to an FMATS Policy Committee meeting the fact that there were many community complaints regarding Farewell/Trainor neighborhood safety issues and significant traffic increases, related to the opening of Lazelle and Birchwood Homes. D and E streets were temporarily closed with a ditch as a result. A rough scope was developed and \$350,000 was appropriated in the TIP. Since that time, quite a bit of work has been done in the neighborhood. Rep. Jay Ramras has come forward with a legislative grant for \$250,000. A conceptual traffic calming model for Hamilton Acres and Shannon Park has been developed. This includes speed humps, traffic

calming circles at some of the higher ADT intersections. Farewell and Trainor intersection does not likely warrant any signalization, but some pedestrian or safety improvements. The bend at the end of Farewell, where it turns into Trainor, is a site where cars slide off the road, across the sidewalk, into people's yards. It is also a path the school children take. There are several solutions the City has been discussing, including a flashing speed sign, speed humps, a guardrail and/or retaining wall. The \$350,000 in the TIP and the \$250,000 from the legislature can be used in the neighborhood, but with an expanded scope. It is requested the D & E street safety closures be included into the Trainor/Farewell project.

- **MOTION:** To include safety improvements at the D and E street closures at the south side of the ARRC right of way in the Farewell/Trainor Area project. (Schmetzer/Birkholz) None opposed. Approved.

e. TIP Administrative Modification #8. Ethan Birkholz reported that Headquarters declined to approve the previous TIP Modification #8 because it was not fiscally constrained. The grandfathering did not match with their STIP. Under the Illinois project, it was determined \$2 million in general funds could only be used in design or right of way, therefore it had to be revised. A report explaining the changes was included in the meeting packet.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve the TIP Modification #8 with revisions as presented. (Schmetzer/Bratcher) None opposed. Approved.

8. Public Comment Period None

9. Other Issues

a. Community Transportation Association of America Letter. David Leone reported FNSB has been involved with federally mandated coordinated transportation for quite some time. It requires transit systems like our MACs or Anchorage's People Mover to work cohesively with other transit providers in the community to coordinate resources. We have been struggling for three years, brought in a consultant last year who presented to the FMATS committees. Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) hosts an annual institute to bring a team from 20 communities around the nation together to work out how to better coordinate transportation. The four member team: Glenn Miller representing Transportation, Nadine Winters representing the Borough Assembly as an elected official, Jim Kretchm, the regional director of Access Alaska representing disability services, and Nikki Kretchm, representing Job Service, a federally funded training organization. If accepted, CTAA would pay expenses of the team. The application process requests, of those transit systems under an MPO, a letter of support from the MPO. This letter of support by FMATS is in support of the application to CTAA Institute for Coordinated Transportation and recommending they accept the application to have the team attend for four days in November.

- **MOTION:** To recommend to the Policy Committee approval of the letter of support to CTAA for a team to attend the Institute for Coordinated Transportation. (Birkholz/Hardesty) None opposed. Approved.

10. Informational Items

a. 2010-2013 STIP Development Timeline. Ethan Birkholz reported that Headquarters is still adjusting the timeline. At this time, they are probably not going to take new projects for

inclusion in the STIP. They will take nominations for new projects, but it will probably go on the needs list because there are an overwhelming number of projects that are already in the STIP that cannot be funded.

b. Construction Status Report. Ethan Birkholz reported that Van Horn will be almost complete this fall. 2nd & Wilbur is complete. Mike Schmetzer reported the City of Fairbanks is now paving around the corner to Alaskaland on 2nd from Wilbur St. Ethan Birkholz reported the North Pole Overpass is still limited to one lane and in progress. The Chena Pump/Chena Small Tracks scope change is awaiting a revised estimate. LRTP Update - currently in negotiations with a consultant (Kittleson).

11. Adjourn

- **Motion to adjourn.** (Bratcher/Schmetzer) None opposed. Approved.
Meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

The next scheduled Technical Committee Meeting is September 3, 2008, Noon, City Hall, City of Fairbanks.

Approved: Todd Boyce
Todd Boyce
FMATS Technical Committee

Date: 9/10/08